

BARRIONUEVO, FAUSTO, M.F.A. Mudfish (2013)
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The poems of this collection are intended to display, through dramatic monologues and family history, an array of personas and topics that would consider themselves unapologetic in their discussion. The style of each poem reinforces its theme and topic to create an atmosphere for the speaker, persona, or character in order to form a conversation between reader and author. These poems use colloquial language while drawing from traditional forms in their construction of white space and stanza formation. My techniques include surrealistic elements and dialogue that act as figuration for the larger themes that exist within these poems. The exploration of self becomes apparent from topic to topic while entertaining the reader with different, but connective interests, forming a thread for the narration to build and expand into larger truths.

MUDFISH

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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Gator Trap

There are no palm trees with coconuts in Miami,
no shade in Miami, only skinny trunks with useless

canopies. Money makes the world go around. Money
makes you in Miami. Ghetto attitudes, gimmicks

and lust, Chongas with hoop earrings and smudged
lip liner. It's 1:00 am, the crowd stumbles alongside

a fleet of deco painted taxis, the double wide sidewalks
wait for you in Miami. States away, my arms remain

tan around her snow bird skin and I'm safe from
the habits of flamingos drowning their beaks in Miami.

During the day, the Cubans, who dance salsa
with their god-like bodies, work out and starve,

tearing their ligaments for Miami. Clubs are corporate,
Drag Queens are going extinct, traditions dying in Miami.

Latin whispers about Gringo tourists. Spanish
arches in modern designs and vacant skyscrapers,

a thriving ghost town. Miami is crowding in on itself,
devouring what remains of the river,

where Angelo and Matty smoke Jane's dreadlocks,
watch as the clear green bottles float away from Miami.



Sunshine State

Out of the shout comes the cry
and mercy is dead on the sidewalk
with gum stains where running graffiti
cuddles beside its corpse, yet
I steal a penny from its pocket,
stumble into Little Havana
where houses lean over
the street, to beg, to crumble
and dissolve in the gutter
with the handicapped
who are homeless and forgotten,
but the rats, who keep them there,
are running towards the gulf
as they shift the street and its gravel
even as the locals stand
at their barred windows, mouths open
to television drooling down
their balconies, breaking away
rusted old ways of leaving their children
at the deli, listening for that
door bell and beast to crawl over
the butcher's welcome mat,
but I stay, focus on Joe, who cuts
the meat just right, just the way I like it.

The Cajun Poet

“He’s down St. Peter, near the cathedral,” says an old
hen with a pale slender neck. The preacher beside her glares
over the crowd.

They search for a hound with a gin musk, who sings
hymns into empty bottles,
teases young widows in front of the Cat’s Meow.

“Look at him laughing, Father, enjoying the parade.
Rabid in the hen house, his hair candle wax under
his white hat, another baiting smile in Louisiana
doused in confetti, reciting smut
to young girls in poetic whispers, tells them he’s a fortune teller.
He probably takes them on his boat to the bayou and under
a mosquito net, he says he loves you.”

The preacher grabs her hand, stops her from picking
at the gold wedding band around her finger.
He tells her, “Go home, forget about him.
Go home to your husband.”

Exhibit of Subjectivity

In the bedroom partially awake, he mistakes
the open doorway to their bathroom
for a picture frame. A woman's silhouette
is a charcoal brush drawn and redrawn over
her breast on the shower curtain. A porcelain tub
blends the amber in the room and helps other
portraits appear in the threshold. He shuffles
through the oeuvre of an entire body
of relationships, each a figure drawing
of a past lover or fantasy from his day-to-day.
The water dripping off her body undoes
the glaze coat on the paintings. She turns off
the shower head and steps out onto the granite floor,
her imperfections, those inimitable freckles
only the flick of a brush can create.
She lies in bed with her wash of honey hair
over his pillows, ticking his nose below
a popcorn ceiling. The unavoidable canvas
hangs over his head.

Thin Air

After much practice, pilots of Holy Smoke
break the weightless blue sky with a message,
 "Jesus Saves."

White fluffy letters high above Orlando, Florida
cast temporary shade for street corners
and repossessed homes, table tops
with plates left empty. Their sign spreads
across hundreds of church roofs, the altars
kept clean and tidy for worship.

The propeller, flying low, startles children
in a theme park. Some with balloons
lose their grip. Tourists exit onto the parking lots,
and overhead, the pilots take their victory lap.
Meanwhile, the lake reflects only a smudge.

Descending

Mid flight, he wants a drink.
and will pay cash
to me or anyone else
for that last farewell
before he admits himself
into rehab.

“Sorry Sir, but we do not
accept cash for alcohol
on our airline.”

He tells all of row G
about his daughter, passes
around her photo, still
no one is willing
to issue credit in his name.

He leans over the seat
between us,
cursing under his breath
at the attendant.
Told me how his wife
threatened him if he didn't go.

I let him know that he was
a brave man, even though
I didn't mean it.

Everyone in the plane
is waiting for him to crack,
including me.
The seatbelt sign is red,
and we're all on edge
waiting to witness a man,

at 31,000 feet, fall
to his knees
for a drink
with a twenty
sweating in his hands.

Photo of My Sister in Special Ed, 1992

No bite marks or bruised pitched skin,
but eyebrows pinned

to her bangs in worry, arms knitted
around one another.

She was having a good day, ignoring
makeshift chatter,

not yelling when they took her pillow
and pacifier away.

She'd tear the cotton in her pillow,
if she was nervous,

made little clouds of comfort. It was
with abundance

she could create a cosmos. I know she
must have tried

to listen in on the world that day, it was
sunny and soft.

The tall windows kept the white in
her eyes, full.

No Single Draft

If Fausto Barrionuevo goes to Hell for anything
it'll be for flipping off
little old ladies at the grocery store.

He hates it when they scold him
for not knowing Spanish.
"You have no culture, mi'jo."

He'd like to think of himself as a sheet of writing,
revisited and half finished,
a draft read over a dozen times,

a poet who protests against the use
of the ampersand
and disagrees that the art of topiary is useless,
knows that it can trim the hedges
of thoughts.

He has an aura of kindness and a clue
that the imagination does more
sprinkled on top than measured,
that there is romance in the wings of a dung beetle
as well as in a prism and a line.

Ground

Down a brick tunnel
under the dismal streets of Paris,
Mr. André Breton, pen in hand,
interviews a chandelier.
Hungry, I plead for words.
He throws a few scraps
from his notes and like a pigeon
feasting, I bow at every morsel.
Ink leaks from my nose,
dripping onto my lips.
I taste the black hills,
witness the vineyards drenched
in sweat, cawing on the fence
at the women plucking
the grapes. *Thank you for the meal.*
With severed wheat-heads
in my pocket, I overhear the chandelier
tell Mr. Breton to allow the reader,
in his search for the imaginary,
the dramatic effect of fearing
the ground. Mr. Breton replies,
“existence est partout.”

Mosquito

Morning. And I feel stupendous
fluttering my arms on the linen
over slits of light
 stretched out with the sun.

The hairs on my leg shift with her
goose bumps. I cling to her body,
kissing her neck tightly.
 I expect her to slap me.

Instead, she is calm like the A.C.,
and I am as easy to
ignore as the buzzing
 in the room. Has my kiss

become so numb that she craves
nothing from me? Or have I drained
her of the strength
 to turn me away?

Burlesque

Our head mistress, the Lady Shameless,
approaches.

Her fingers grasp the pole, smoking
a gentlemen's pipe with glazed-over fiery lips.
In the hotel's ballroom her breath releases a fog
onto the microphone's weaved silver mesh.

She introduces her vixens:
Morgan La Rue, dancing her sailors home
from sea, then a Miss Aurora Natri,
a Mardi-gras party girl playing the drunken dream,
looking for her French king. Next
is a Miss Holly Peno, the wild beast,
the prize catch of any hunter's game
as she surely will enjoy
being mounted on your wall.

Lady Shameless, licking her top lip
as anyone would when preparing for dessert,
announces that she has a surprise for us tonight
and escorts her final vixen of the night,
a Vanessa Fey – no sexy attire-
she only wears a black dress and
no stockings.

She is that one piece bathing suit
on a nude beach. A comfort that comes
with morning, lying on pillows
like a soft kiss beneath your cheek bone.

Men, who can't taste this fine art, take another sip
of their drinks or shift focus
to their watches, scratch the unexposed skin
underneath their wedding-bands.

Vanessa turns, a wink, a slight pose
and then tosses a kiss into the audience.
I secretly claim for my own. The curtain begins to shut,
the room's dim lights turn bright.
She is a tablespoon of pure sugar for lost men.

Slurpee

Like a blues man, I suffer for my flavor honey,
Red 40 and Yellow 5. My hand trembles in my pocket
for extra change. I'm no jive turkey,
no tea or coffee drinker.

For me it's a sexy volume-sized cup of slush
drenched with artificial love, baby,
a never ending supply of banana punch,
pineapple paradise, white cherry, and my mouth
wide open, each lever within my grasp
pulled, and one flavor then another
poured over me, the king of slurp.

Walking Side by Side [1932]

Out of the delta, laundry tongues
criss-cross tense wires;
unsung wives reel in the linens.

Johnson's guitar, hell-heavy
on his back, won't slow him;
reveling drunks

with their heads cocked-out
can't tie him down.
Earlier that morning, he left

his dying wife for his own blues.
She tunes her last
loaf of bread while he walks

up the road to a juke joint.
He doesn't want the extra weight
dragging on his guitar,

said he had to go
and left her to her madness.
On the stage, he takes his seat

on a wobbly old stool,
starts picking on his strings.
He scratches his ear like a dog,

thinks he hears someone wailing.
Shadow men must be on the river,
drowning the evil outside.

Later into the night, a dark
crazed woman
takes up her revenge

on her husband.
She hovers in like a ghoul,
searching to shovel

the dead back underground,
dragging Johnson

out by his guitar strings.

The silence like at a wake
is deafening,
They know there is no escaping

your woman.
He'll have to save himself,
maybe sell his soul to the devil.

Box of Air

With her daughter crying in the incubator,
in that pale green room,
my mother pulls at the stitches
in her sleep. At five months,
my sister is no bigger
than a thumb. My mother can't help
but trace the seams along her belly, wish
she could check the Velcro seal
of the crib's plastic casing.
And for a year, my sister hid under
a white blanket, her tiny arms empty
under a quiet knitted sky.

The Biker at the ATM

His withdrawal is shoved in his wallet
and his card is placed next to a picture of his son.

I ask him, waiting for my turn,
"How old is your boy?"

because I suspect he's just a mirage,
with bleached blonde hair

and leather jacket, taking money
from his wife's account to pay for the coloring

on that sleeve tattoo slithering over his wrist.
He pretends not to hear me,

taking off his shirt to apply deodorant
a little mouthwash to rinse out the alcohol.

His bike parked on the curb, written in cursive
on his gas tank, *Triumph*.

It must have been a good week for him,
with flowers and a stuffed animal tied to the +1 seat.

I pretend not to see him when I walk around it.
"He would have been seven this year."

Mudfish

On the parade boat, the voodoo queen is magnificent
with beads draped between her exposed breasts.

Robed men bow at her feet.
The crowd cheers when she pours red wine
over her head.

Over my head, wedged through slatted panels,
my girlfriend shuts the shades
and accuses me of being a Mudfish
who belongs at the bottom of the bayou, rotting.

I picture myself in the filth, meditating below
the cypress where she asks me
to ignore the fist diving into my nest,
fingers wiggling as bait, not to sink in my teeth.

But who am I to love like a Tibetan monk---
sweeping his bed for the tiny lives he might crush?

1511, Year of Our Lord

Beneath the canopies in Cuba, I witness
the slaughter in Yara.

Naked men who trill amid the trees
protecting their families.

Spaniards bind the men's hands, stand them
along the shore.

They tell us of God,
as Hatuey, our leader, burns at the stake,
laughing into the palm trees.

Straw

Dust settles into the pinholes where seeds burst
under the weight of a farmer.

Mounds meant for a plow now trail
the land below the beaks
of desperate birds.

His bare back, lucent in the heat, reaches
the scarecrow's post.
Made of straw, it wears less debt.

Violets surge as he drags
the carcass of the yes man to his porch.

His ancestors tear at the remains and the bank
will consume the rest.

A mug of water waits
in calm ridged hands; his wife reading
the ledger.

He unbuttons the plaid shirt and checks
its pockets for change;
roaches pile under.

What is left in the pile of straw is a feast
for the birds.

A Meeting with Rod Serling

At a clearing, I check my watch for the hour,
peer in another dimension, parallel to our own.
Static is no longer a T.V. lullaby. Rather it's a man
in a tailored suit. On this road, cattle not only
wink and hiss, but mind their numbered earrings.
That's a sign post up ahead, on the channel
a black and white farm house built by Serling.
Inside, I find him gazing into the sandbox
at a doll buried in a bucket. All the windows
are cracked and blackboards line the walls
with algebraic equations. Into the sandpit,
I sink down the spiral of trace, not for a rerun,
but to be introduced as his protagonist. Before
my feet dip into that fifth plane of existence,
his smile furrows and sympathetic nod soothes
my throat, which is filled with the ticking of a clock.

From the Neighbor's Yard

grass blades whistle.
A whimpering dog
sniffs the night-air alone.

Melting chocolate
drips down the back of my tongue
as mauve-clouds
sluggishly lounge
over the sky.

The avocado tree can't help
but bow.

Its leaves cascade,
some break away,
and I, too, feel their weight.
I, too, shed my skin.

Searching for Wild Peacocks

Our family's routine
is a Sunday Morning drive
in the Grove, mansions close to the bay.
We search for wild peacocks
and along the way
my sister practices her sign language:
water for water fountain,
money for bank.

Usually we see a couple
dragging their feathers
on the roofs, gliding down
to eat cat food, maybe
one still sleeping in a moss tree.
But today it's dry out
and the sun is a little too bright
to look up at a thousand eyes
rusting in the canopies.

My mother has to pretend not
to understand my sister's
tiny lettered hands suspended in the air.
Usually "b.i.r.d." for peacocks
is signed and my mother
says "Brr.D." slowly repeats it
for my sister to practice.

It's hard to explain the manifesto
of a bird to a little girl
who experiences life with
clipped wings.
In the past, she has bitten her arm
for attention, forcing
anyone around her to feel
as she does, hurt and scared.

All my mother can do is hope
that my sister will forget
or let it go, wait
till next Sunday for the birds,
maybe press fast forward
on her CD player,

look in the rear view
and smile,
understanding that birds
don't always follow a routine.

Ritual

I drive to the middle of nowhere,
shut off my headlights, and in the distance,

lost in the everglades, stumble towards
my church, the unknown. Its broad shoulders,

the mantel looms over me. I speak to its
shadow on the wall, seek comfort and listen

to the crickets, who still sing for me.
Beer bottles and cigarettes clutter the ground.

The remains of bonfires barrel up with smoke
through plank wood, crumble

into splinters. I am years away from knowing
the sun, that quiet comfort of shades

being drawn and the distance between each
strand of my hair. Sometimes I prefer

those days when I worried about a curfew,
planned ways to sneak junk food,

late at night, into my bedroom. Instead of keeping
a bat near the door or installing a deadbolt

for safety. In the calm moments, I'll watch
bunnies twitch their way across the tall grass,

take solace in the indefinite, alone in the swamps.

Holding onto Sleep

I.

I hear my childhood blanket
crooning
from inside my briefcase.
At the train station, *Moonlight Serenade*
plays over the loudspeaker;
the clerk has fallen asleep.

The blanket demands a dance
before the train arrives.
With her fabric pressed against
my chest, I carry her out
to the platform, unfold her cotton body,
and tie her two corners
to each wrist.

II.

She takes the lead when the gears
embrace the rails;
I read the signs at the entrance to the train,

ALL MUST HAVE A FACE TO BOARD.

By the engine's headlight the coal fire
turns the smoke vibrant
when the conductor howls,
"All aboard!"
I pull her thread closer to my lips
and hide my face in the warmth of her body.

Spoonbending

A gone hungry voodoo queen,
out of thread, prepares
for her show by etching zigzags
on the silverware. She welcomes
people to surround her
in Jackson Square. They crowd
between her thumb and
the backbone of the spoon.
She sews their gaping mouths
shut with her concentration
and begins to press
forward on the spine, till
the handle digs into her palm.
The tiny grips of her thumb print
mesh with the cuts
in the metal. The tip of the bowl
bows as with our heads to her feet.
It's a con. Not real bayou magic.
Yet tourist and locals
litter the brick dust
circling her body with nickels
and dimes, breaking
the silence she wedges into them.

Storyville, Louisiana 1912

The red-light district belongs
to a certain beat, a taboo, where saxes

wail over Cupid's defeat
at the hands of a Cello-woman

on Iberville. Her sweat rolls down
maple thighs. The bass speaks sex

on the corner of Basin and St. Louis
Street, near where Jazz players

and Hoodoo merchants linger, ready
to possess the living in the drenched bayou.

Picking the Cannibal Chicken

Rats surround the fence, gossip
with hunger. The ugly will spare
no crumbs. For weeks, baby hens
with their beaks shattered
have been killed by a rooster
hiding in the coop. The farmer
is executioner, his ax swings inches
above their twitchy heads,
trying to scare out the guilty.
Corpse after corpse his ax pierces
the yolk of the sun, calming
the weight of the dead on the stump.
It's winter by the time
he kills the right one. The coop
is empty, the killing stump dry,
and the rats are too heavy
to hide from the dogs.

House Call

Rick invites me to unhook the bungee cord
from the gate,
follow him past the rusted dumb bells
leaning against the wall.

In Miami, it is never through the front door, but off
to a side entrance.

I watch the corners of an old love seat
he carries above his head, help him with the last
remains of his divorce.

At the kitchen table, he introduces me
to his father, who packs his bottom lip,
throws his breakfast to the wall and ignores my hello.

Rick grabs a napkin to wipe the crumbs
from his father's beard; calls him *Papi*.
He takes the fork covered in egg.
Tells him to apologize. *Be nice!* Rick says.

Rick, who once hit his wife and drove me to a strip bar
at 2:00 am to watch his girlfriend perform.

I'm introduced as Rick's nephew, which I'm not.

But I am pals with his spoiled step-daughter,
I've eaten his barbeque, and I know things about Rick.
To him that makes us family.

The Silver Surfer

I unearth the garage-artifact, a cosmic protagonist,
in a box labeled “Miscellaneous.”
Hidden under a narrowing roof my father built,

he mocks my excitement.
We are searching for computer parts. My father
pointing-out from the ladder which box to un-tape.

He opens it and carefully begins to solder a CPU
to the broken motherboard,
 watching me watch him
 glue metal.

His relentless smoke cannons deploy
burning bombs of ash.
The garage floor sprinkled with the confetti.

I stare at the cover of Issue 79, deep amethyst
with black hollowed atoms emanating
from the surfer's fists
and vigorous white eyes glowing
with energy.

It was the first and only comic book my father brought me.

He tried to teach me discipline, through envy.

Once, he was a body builder. Now he's losing his teeth from smoking.

In an electric pulse, the air is filled with the smell
of smoked circuits:
my father's work done.

It was the face he made, the calm deciphering look
of curiosity, the joke
that signaled the forthcoming
of countless attempts at reconfiguring the board.

The Silver Surfer is ageless and doesn't need

water or air, even food
to live nor survive.

For a long time, I thought my father was the same.

Barn Owl

Pigeon coops. Roach motels. Mouse traps
veiled by the billboard's back-bending lamps
veering out like tree snakes.
Hushed yellows on the backs of mosquitoes.
The barn owl steady on the scaffold
with its bold hunting profile flying over the beach.
A cold breath flows from its cracked beak,
winds escaping through cavernous lids.
Rain drops snap onto granite as clouds,
black as pavement, roll by.
Some deer dash across the interstate,
antlers charging into dark forest.
Under the painted orange sky, a slogan in the sand:
Fly on down to the best kept secret in the city.

Take a Load off, Danny

You've been doing this for over 20 years,
 making conversations
 with strangers like myself.
This a place of chatter and dirty jokes
while you cut hair.

On the table beside
your clippers soaking in a blue cleansing
liquid, pictures of Maggie, your dog,
 whose broken hip made her immobile.

 And you the kind soul
who took her outside, every several hours
so she could relieve herself
 'til the day she passed away.
 How a young lady neighbor
thought you were so sweet.

The next day she made lobster soup
and kept you company on your back porch.

On my next visit,
 you repeated that same story, this time
 she was in her bathrobe
 hanging her bra and panties.
 "Laundry Day."

I laughed when you said it. The humming
of a double blade shifting near my ear,
cutting down my sideburns.

 You tell me that will fix it,
the unevenness
 and go on
with your story, mention how sometimes
 you stay up late to watch her
 prance naked around her bedroom,
better than a cold glass of milk.

 A week later,
my head is steaming, and you are outside
smoking a cigarette,
we see each other from across the street.

And at your station, I ask you to shave it all off.
You don't argue, but mention how blistering hot
this summer has been.

The breeze of a fine razor skims the lumps
like a dust tornado clearing the mounds,
thrusting the cold with its blade.

Then you begin; tell me that you have a date
this weekend.

You lean in; let me know that she's almost
thirty years younger than you.

The weekend passes,
a couple of bristles spout, time to call you, Danny.
I have to pay you a little extra
to use a special set of trimmers.
You mention it
might pinch the skin, but not to worry,
you have a story or two
to keep away the pain.

But then you say, "Maybe you should tell me
about yourself.

I mean, with your height
they must be begging for it."

I look up at the mirror, searching for ways to top
your story, noticing how oddly-shaped my head is.

"A gentlemen, huh?"

you whisper in my ear, trimming only skin,
and tell me

the kind of details
an old man hopes to remember.

Marlene

At a restaurant, my sister notices the lingering stares.

Quietly her eyes stray.

Auroras bloom

along her aneurism scars.

She begins fixing napkins

and upside down spoons,

then nods at my rapt expression,

“Good job, Marlene.”

She smiles at me

the same way she did when cuddled with her pillow

late at night, half asleep in her crib.

I’d stand by the door, wait for the covers to inflate,

close enough to hear her breathing,

since faith in that dark room

looked like everything else, empty.

The Drive Down to Key West

On the seven mile bridge
with windows down
and the sun loose in the sky.
Relentless winds
 swimming into the front seat.

A calm teal wraps
its legs around the pillars.
The phantom train,
 still in motion,
on Flagler's overseas railway.

Its path trails like the skipping
of a stone, galloping
starboard on concrete arches.

Salt and heat break away at the tracks,
 radio waves fizzle,
 and at the tallest peak,
 we rust.

Stingray

Jane is beside me on the pier, fishing
while tiny bites trick my hands into tugs.

My date, Clare, is back
in the house
pouring shots of vodka with Jane's husband.

One for each of them, most likely:
They'll probably forget to bring the bait.

Jane's line sinks further as she casts
out again and again. I ask as her legs soak
in magenta waves,
"I wonder what's taking them so long."

The pier is calm with the Caribbean
sewn to its columns.

On the white balcony,
looking to the orange glow trying
to peek in through the blinds.

There's a parting warmth leaving my date's neck
as his shadow leans over her.

Her white cotton shirt
becomes transparent as the sun sets.

My line wilts when I hear a splash. A stingray
emerges from the tepid distance.

Footsteps begin their way down to the pier,
but they're not in time to see the ray ascending
over the horizon of Key West,
its spotted wings

breaking the yolk of the sun, more tender
than a kiss
less harmful than a hello.

Inside Breathing

Jennifer's neck had a hole in it,
a tiny incision made at birth

with a device
that allowed her to breathe.

We were both eight
and our favorite hiding spot

was a desk catty-cornered
in my old room.

She and I
tucked away by the hutch,

weaved cobwebs
into child-sized adventures.

Once, she begged me
to remove the inhaler

around her throat. And when
I did, she grappled

with the cold, every breath
forced an inescapable yawn

to swallow. I cried
out for our parents,

ached to crawl inside her lungs.
But she told me to be quiet.

I stayed close, keeping the rim
of her throat clean,

relieved when her mother
came to take her home.

New Neighborhood

Abuelo strolled barefoot around the neighborhood:
the intersections were fun house mirrors and the blue
crab grass in every yard his labyrinth.
After each block, he'd asked a couple of tight-lipped
mailboxes for directions. It was like a game:
screaming his name, having neighbors I have never met
yelling, "He's over here! He's over here!"
finding him chasing a black cat mumbling,
"Aquí, Fidel, Aquí," or cornered by a garden hose
hissing at his shoes. His favorite thing to do
was laugh to himself at the park. We'd catch him
riding the swing set belly down or soaking wet
building sand-homes with children, warning them
of the grass. Later, I'd help my father rinse
Abuelo's feet in the bath tub. He held him standing,
while I with a bath towel cleaned the sand
between his toes. In Havana, Abuelo danced
the Habanera with beautiful women and worked
the Spanish fields. There are scars on his legs from
a caving prong he used. Maybe that's why he wanders.